Kindly amend the claims as follows:

1. (Amended) A method to determine the presence or absence of Streptococcus Group A antigen in a sample, comprising the following steps in order:

(a) extracting the antigen from said sample in an assay chamber with two or less extraction reagents, wherein said two reagents [may be] are added to said assay chamber in no particular sequence;

(b) introducing the sample receiving region of a lateral flow immunochromatographic assay device into said extraction reagents [containing] comprising said extracted antigen without further addition of reagents or manipulation of said sample, wherein said lateral flow immunochromatographic device comprises a sample receiving region comprising a porous material which conducts lateral flow of a liquid sample, in lateral flow contact with a separate analyte detection region comprising a porous material which conducts lateral flow of said liquid sample, wherein said analyte detection region comprises a mobile indicator labeling reagent at a discrete labeling situs and an immobile indicator capture reagent at a discrete capture situs, wherein said indicator labeling reagent is capable of forming a complex with said extracted antigen and said immobile indicator capture reagent is capable of binding to said extracted antigen-indicator labeling reagent complex;

(c) forming an extracted antigen-indicator labeling reagent complex; and

(d) determining the presence or absence of said antigen in the sample by the presence or absence of a signal formed by the binding of said extracted antigen-

indicator labeling reagent complex to [an] said indicator capture reagent specific for said extracted antigen-indicator labeling reagent complex.

2. (Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein said analyte detection region of said lateral flow immunocharomatographic device further comprises a mobile control labeling reagent at a discrete labeling situs, and an immobile control capture reagent at a discrete control situs, wherein said immobile control capture reagent is capable of binding said mobile control labeling reagent, and wherein said method further compris[ing]es the step of:

[(a)] (e) determining the presence of a positive control signal formed by the binding of said control labeling reagent to the immobile control capture reagent.

4. (Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein said extraction reagents [further] comprise 0.2-5 M sodium nitrite and 0.02-2 M acetic acid.

5. (Amended) The method of claim 4 wherein the sodium nitrite solution further comprises [has a concentration of] 2M sodium nitrite and a color indicator reagent and the acetic acid solution has a concentration of 0.3 M, wherein the 0.3 M acetic acid solution is added to the solution of 2M sodium nitrite, and wherein the color of the [liquid] 2M sodium nitrite solution changes [from pink to light yellow] as [said] the 0.3 M acetic acid solution is added to [said] the 2M sodium nitrite solution.

6. (Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein said [lateral flow immunochromatographic assay device having a] sample receiving region further comprises [containing] neutralizing buffer.

Kindly add the following claim 9:

9. (new) A method to determine the presence or absence of a Streptococcus antigen in a sample, comprising the following steps in order:

(a) extracting the antigen from said sample in an assay chamber with two or less extraction reagents, wherein said two reagents are added to said assay chamber in no particular sequence;

(b) introducing the sample receiving region of a lateral flow immunochromatographic assay device into said extraction reagents comprising said extracted antigen without further addition of reagents or manipulation of said sample, wherein said lateral flow immunochromatographic device comprises a sample receiving region comprising a porous material which conducts lateral flow of a liquid sample, in lateral flow contact with a separate analyte detection region comprising a porous material which conducts lateral flow of said liquid sample, wherein said analyte detection region comprises a mobile indicator labeling reagent at a discrete labeling situs and an immobile indicator capture reagent at a discrete capture situs, wherein said indicator labeling reagent is capable of forming a complex with said extracted antigen